



# **Sabbatical Elections Rules**

## **2012**

Sabbatical elections are a legal requirement for students' unions and are run in accordance with the 1994 Education Act. The Act itself establishes the University as the regulator of the elections and ensures that each and every registered student is provided with the opportunity to a.) vote and b.) put themselves forward for election if they so wish. To satisfy the requirements of the Act, Bangor Students' Union has worked hard to prepare a set of election rules, organisational structure and guidance that sets out to make sure that the elections process is run according to the following principles:

**Inclusiveness; Accessibility; Fairness; Equality; Accountability; Transparency and Competitiveness**

For clarity, ownership and interpretation of these rules lies with the Returning Officer. Candidates should make every effort to check with them, or their appointed deputy, prior to taking any action of which they are unsure.

**Election Officials:**

*Returning Officer:* Ann North, Membership Development Manager, NUS Wales

(ann.north@nus-wales.org.uk)

Appointed as the external returning officer, Ann has initial responsibility for the election process. Her job is to ensure fairness, enforce the rules and oversee the election count.

*Deputy Returning Officer:* Rhys Dart, Director, Bangor Students' Union

(rhys.dart@undeb.bangor.ac.uk)

As the Deputy Returning Officer, Rhys will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the election on Ann's behalf. This will include organising centralised elections publicity, organising ballot stations, securing ballot papers and boxes, briefing candidates and dealing with complaints initially.

*Elections Committee:*

Voting Members: David Fordham; Paul Parker; Trefor Alun; Danielle Buckley; Johanna Illers; Rich Gorman and Jamie Evans.

In attendance: Ann North; Rhys Dart; Aled Jones

Elections Committee have a number of roles to play, but their primary job is to ensure that the election is run fairly on behalf of the student body and the University. They have assisted in the preparation for the election and have had a hand in deciding rules, voting station locations and publicity and briefing content. Their role during the elections is to support and safeguard the democratic process and you will see some of them on voting stations and out and about during the elections period. It is essential that these individuals are neutral and not aligned to any campaign.

## **Election Rules:**

### **Contents:**

1. Nominations
2. Campaign period
3. Conduct
4. Publicity
5. Complaints

These rules have been designed to be as clear, easy to follow and easy to enforce as possible. If anyone has any queries regarding the rules please speak to Rhys Dart (rhys.dart@undeb.bangor.ac.uk) to seek clarification in the first instance.

**Breaking any of these rules may result in sanctions being placed on a candidate, campaigner or campaign.**

### **Section One - Nominations:**

- a) A candidate is only entered into the election when they have successfully attained the following criteria:
- b) Returned the completed nominations form to the deputy returning officer (in person or by e-mail) by the nominations deadline.
- c) Secured a nominator and seconder, both being current, registered, students at Bangor University or current serving Bangor Students' Union sabbatical officers.
- d) Is a current, registered, student at Bangor University or a current serving Bangor Students' Union sabbatical officer in their first term of office.
- e) Handed in manifesto text in either English or Welsh (no more than 350 words of whichever language it has been submitted in) ready for translation, by the nominations deadline
- f) Attended the candidates' briefing, or received a verbal briefing from the deputy returning officer if they were not able to attend and had sent apologies in advance.
- g) They agree to be bound by these rules.

### **Section Two - Campaign Period:**

- a) Campaigning does not begin until the official start of campaigning on March 12<sup>th</sup> at 9AM. Candidates are permitted only to prepare campaign material prior to that date.
- b) Campaigning is allowed up to the close of voting.

### **Section Three – Conduct:**

- a) Candidates and campaigners who through their involvement with, or who hold (or have held) positions of responsibility within, Bangor Student's Union may not use resources available to them and not to other students. This includes union purchased equipment and clothing, central SU mailing lists and official SU twitter accounts and facebook groups. This list is not exhaustive.
- b) Candidates are responsible for all campaign activity carried out in their name, this includes: campaigning undertaken prior to the nominations deadline and actions of third parties on their behalf.
- c) Candidates and campaigners may not:
  - i) force, coerce or in any way intimidate students, particularly when they are near or in the act of voting.
  - ii) vote on behalf of another student
  - iii) intimidate any participant in the election
  - iv) deliberately sabotage any campaign other than their own
  - v) deface another candidate's materials, publicity, online media, social networking site etc
  - vi) make an attempt to defraud the election
  - vii) make any attempt to influence the impartiality of the Returning Officer, Deputy Returning Officer, Elections Committee or Students' Union staff
  - viii) discuss the personal traits of another candidate
  - ix) misrepresent another candidate's views or make claims about themselves or any other candidate that are untrue.
  - x) Set up their own 'voting station', hand voters an electronic device for the purpose of voting or demand that voters take out their own electronic device in order to vote immediately
  - xi) bring the election process into disrepute

- d) Candidates and campaigners must:
  - i) Uphold the letter and spirit of the election rules and the students' union equal opportunities, zero tolerance to harassment and bilingual policies at all times.
  - ii) Follow the laws and regulations of both the land and the University at all times.

*Example of positive campaigning:*

*Ben and Jerry are standing for election to the same position. Ben wants to convince voters that he is best for the job. **It is not acceptable for him to say:** "Jerry! What does he know about running the union? He's an idiot".*

***He could say** "Hi, I'm Ben. I believe that I'm the best candidate in this election. Please read my manifesto, it sets out what I'm going to do for students over the next twelve months. If you like what you read please vote for me on March 23<sup>rd</sup>." **He could also say** "I believe that I am the best candidate for the job, with the most experience and the clearest plan for the future. I don't believe that my opponent has a clear view of what he wants to achieve, neither do I believe that his ideas are practical".*

*It is **never acceptable** to make personal comments about other candidates or their supporters, though all candidates are encouraged to read each others' manifestos and debate each others' ideas.*

#### **Section Four – Publicity:**

- a) Candidates have a spending limit of £50 which may not be exceeded or increased. This figure includes all printing and the expenses of all campaigners. Receipts covering all expenditure need to be submitted to the Deputy Returning Officer by 10AM on the morning of the election count.
- b) Candidates are limited to 100 A3 sheets of printed publicity. This is because the Students' Union has a strong commitment to its environmental policy, in addition to encouraging candidates to campaign using more vibrant and creative methods.
- c) Everything used in the election is given a cash value by the Returning Officer, or their nominated Deputy. For clarity, this rule applies to 'campaign gifts' which may have cost you nothing but hold a 'real world' cash value.

- d) All resources and methods that you use in your election campaign should be available to all of the other candidates. It is the responsibility of the candidate to check this before using them.

*For Example:*

*As well as being a student, Patsy works in a local nightclub and is running for election. Her boss would like her club to have a close link with a union sabbatical and so gives her 100 free-entry tickets for the Wednesday night event. Patsy gives these out to students who promise to vote for her in the election.*

*When Edina, another election candidate, approaches the club owner to ask for free tickets to help promote her campaign she is refused and turned away.*

*In this example, Patsy would have to check whether free tickets were available to all candidates before agreeing to use them. The Returning Officer would also want to place a financial value on the tickets and her election budget would decrease as a result of their use.*

- e) The following items are readily available to all candidates and their supporters and so their fair use does not carry a cash value:

Old T-shirts; Paint; Old Bedsheets; Marker Pens; Blu-tack; Pre-used cardboard; Old wood; Pencils; String; Sticky tape; Pins.

NOTE: This rule has been included to assist candidates in making election time exciting, vibrant and high profile. The returning officer and their deputy are aware that this rule may be open to abuse and will be closely monitoring campaign resources as a result. Please remember that they are the people who determine 'fair use'.

*For Example:*

*It is perfectly reasonable to ask all of your campaign supporters to collect their old t-shirts and turn these into campaign t-shirts by painting, drawing or stencilling designs on them. This would not cost you any of your election budget.*

*If you were to go out and buy matching t-shirts, you would have to pay for this out of your election budget.*

*If you screenprint or use transfers on your t-shirts or banners, you would have to pay for this out of your election budget.*

- f) All election printing of manifestos, flyers, posters etc must be done in the students' union by the appropriate members of students' union staff.

- g) To assist with preparing material for all candidates prior to the start of campaigning, candidates are initially limited to three pieces of print-ready artwork (flyers, posters, leaflets etc...)
- h) All elections publicity must include the polling dates and the elections website.
- i) All elections publicity must be fully bilingual and translated and/or checked by the students' union translator **in advance of printing**. The only exception to this rule is campaigning carried out on social networking sites where the following rules apply:
- j) Social Networking
- i) Facebook:
- If campaigning on Facebook, you should have your introduction, manifesto (or extended manifesto) and the election timetable and voting instructions displayed bilingually.
- Your status updates, wall posts and discussion topics may be displayed in the language of your choice.
- ii) Twitter: You may campaign in your language of preference.

NOTE: Translation timetable

- Your manifesto text must be handed in with your nomination by 2PM on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February.
- You must submit all of your publicity text for translation by 12 noon on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February.
- You must have your publicity proof read prior to printing. To aid the process of getting your material printed, you must have your final designs proof read by the Union Translator by 12 noon on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> March. **You are encouraged not to leave this until the last minute.**
- If you meet these deadlines we will work hard to ensure that your publicity is translated and printed prior to the start of campaigning. Material will be translated and printed in order as received.
- The translation limit for publicity prepared before the start of campaigning is no more than 700 words per candidate. This includes the manifesto.
- Following the translation of all of the publicity received by the deadline candidates may submit further designs or text for translation if they so wish but should allow the translator a reasonable amount of time to carry out the work. Delivery of this translation cannot be guaranteed, although all efforts will be made.

NOTE: Publicity design

- You are responsible for the design of your own publicity, including the design of your manifesto pages. Each candidate has two sides of A4 for your manifesto, it is up to you how you design it but it must be bilingual. For those of you that wish, the IT manager will be making himself available to assist with design, and you will be able to book up a one hour design slot.
- The SU will publish an A4 manifesto booklet, containing each candidate's manifesto pages. Candidates are encouraged to design their own page, although a set template will be made available for those who wish.

## Section Five – Complaints:

- a) All complaints made about candidates, campaigners, election officials or the voting process should be submitted in writing to the Deputy Returning Officer. Only complaints submitted in writing will be considered. The complaint must highlight the election rule that has been broken, provide evidence of the breach and suggest a reasonable course of action to be taken.
- b) In the first instance the Deputy Returning Officer will consider a complaint and make a ruling within 24 hours. If it is deemed to be a serious matter the Deputy Returning Officer may refer it immediately to the Returning Officer for consideration.
- c) Complaints regarding the conduct of the Deputy Returning Officer should be made in writing directly to the Returning Officer.
- d) Complaints have to be submitted by the beginning of the election count. Only complaints about the process of the count itself will be considered once the count has started, which must be submitted within 24 hours of the results being declared.
- e) The sanctions available to the Deputy Returning Officer are:
  - i) Warning a candidate of their future conduct.
  - ii) Taking steps to level the playing field to right an election regulation breach.
  - iii) Fining a candidate through either reducing the amount of money they may spend, or by confiscating printed publicity material.
  - iv) Prohibiting a candidate and their campaigners from campaigning for a period of time (up to 24 hours).
  - v) Banning a campaigner from the rest of the campaign (where the campaigner is not the candidate).
- f) In addition to all of the above sanctions, the following are available to the Returning Officer:
  - i) Suspending a candidate from the election pending an investigation
  - ii) Suspending the election process pending an investigation
  - iii) Recommending to the elections committee, and to the University, that a candidate be disqualified
  - iv) Recommending to the elections committee, and to the University, that the election be re-run or a vote annulled.
- g) Candidates may appeal against decisions made by the Returning Officer and their Deputy by submitting their appeal in writing, within 24 hours of the decision being made, following the appeal procedure detailed below:
  - i) First stage appeal is heard by the Returning Officer; if the candidate remains

dissatisfied then,

- ii) Second stage appeal is to the Elections Committee who will hear the case put forward by the candidate and the case put forward for imposing sanctions by the Returning Officer, or their nominated Deputy.
- iii) Final stage appeal is to the University Registrar, or their nominated deputy.